

# Ancient coins don't always fetch top dollar

By Roger Boye

**H**ere are answers to more questions about coins and currency.

**Q**—I've noted in advertisements that some ancient coins cost less than \$10 each. How can anyone afford to sell something so old for so little? Could the coins be counterfeit?

B.G., Aurora

**A**—Despite their age, many ancients retail for modest sums. That's because the supply of certain varieties exceeds the demand.

You should do business with experienced, well-established dealers who can spot the fakes. But don't worry too much. Con artists who forge coins usually work on the higher-priced specimens; there's not much profit in copying cheap ancients.

**Q**—What addresses should we use to order official coin sets from Canada and Great Britain?

Y.P., Chicago

**A**—Write to the Royal Canadian Mint, P.O. Box 478, Station A, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9L9 Canada, and to the British Royal Mint, c/o Barclays Bank of New York, N.A., P.O. Box 2570, New York, N.Y. 10163.

The seven-coin Canadian proof set, which includes a 1986 silver dollar commemorating the centennials of Vancouver, British Columbia, and of coast-to-coast rail travel in Canada, costs \$34 in U.S. funds. The British proof set for 1986, comprised of eight coins in a leather case, goes for \$39.75. New to the British set this year is a base metal, two-pound coin marking the Commonwealth Games to be held next June in Edinburgh, Scotland.

**Q**—I own a 1969 dime that has a normal back side. However, the front is copper color and the dime is much thinner than usual. Is this coin rare?

C.R., Villa Park

**A**—Most likely, one of the two outside clad layers on your dime broke away during the production process, exposing the copper core. Experts say such coins might retail for \$20 or so.

But beware of fakes; hobbyists will pay a premium only for authentic mint errors.

**Q**—Is U.S. paper money from the 1870s still legal tender? Or has Congress made it illegal to use dollar bills more than 100 years old?

B.G., Aurora

**A**—All currency issued by Uncle Sam under the Constitution remains lawful money. However, you wouldn't want to spend the antiques because their value as collectibles probably exceeds the face amounts.